Rail road routes to Pakistan

4193. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to open five rail road routes to Pakistan passport holders on Indo-Pak border and on line of control in Kashmir sector;

(b) if so, the names of check posts to be opened; and

(c) what has been Pakistan's response to India's initiative/decision?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH) : (a) to (c) Government are of the view that the promotion of people-to-people contacts, by making travel between India and Pakistan as simple and easy as possible, will contribute to the development of good neighbourly ties with Pakistan. In keeping with this approach, on 9th July 2001, Government announced that Pakistani passport holders will be allowed to come by the road route and obtain visas at the check-post at Attari. An additional check-post will be opened at Munabao, in Rajasthan. Similar check-posts will also be opened at designated points along the IB and the LOC in Jammu and Kashmir.

During a meeting with the Pakistan Foreign Secretary, on the sidelines of the recently concluded meeting of the SAARC Standing Committee of Foreign Secretaries at Colombo (9-10 August 2001), Indian Foreign Secretary urged Pakistan to facilitate implementation of these steps and consider taking similar measures of its own.

Payment of less salary to workers in UAE

†4194. SHRI GOPALSINHG. SOLANKI : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that the companies are paying less salaries to the Indian workmen engaged in construction field in UAE;

(b) whether Government have taken up the matter officially with the Government of UAE to resolve the issue;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH) : (a) No, Sir. No such complaints have been received by the Government.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Pakistani companies in Nepal against India

4195. SHRI ABANI ROY : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that ISI have been using Pakistani companies in Nepal against India as reported in the 'Hindustan Times' dated 13th August, 2001;

(b) if so, the facts and details thereof;

(c) whether the repeated assurances made by Nepalese Government that their territory would not be allowed for use against India has proved to be futile; and

(d) if so, the reaction of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH) : (a) and (b) The Government is aware of the report published in the 'Hindustan Times' dated 13-8-2001 on ISI backed Pakistani companies operating in Nepal.

The Government is concerned about the misuse of Nepalese territory and the open India-Nepal border by Pakistani agencies, including companies, for activities inimical to India's interest and are seized of the matter.

(c) and (d) The Governments of India and Nepal have agreed that they would not allow their territory to be used for activities inimical to the interests of either country. A bilateral institutional mechanism has also been evolved which includes a Joint Working Group on Border Management and Home Secretary Level Talks to jointly address issues relating to maintenance of peace and security and prevention of criminal activities in the India-Nepal border areas. Regular dialogue of customs officials also takes place under the Agreement for Cooperation to control unauthorised Trade.

During the recent visit of External Affairs Minister to Nepal (August 17-19, 2001), our continuing concerns with regard to the clandestine use of Nepal's territory for anti-Indian activities by Pakistan's ISI were conveyed. He received a firm assurance from His Majesty's Government of Nepal that any such activity against India would not be tolerated and that necessary steps would be taken.